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The Pastoral Perspective

What do you think about when you hear the word *farm*? Herds of grazing cows? Red wooden barns? Rows of summer corn ripening in the sun? Old-time values exemplified by hard work? You probably don't think of mainframe computers—but you should. For the government and any number of corporations are busy collecting all sorts of information about you and me, all of which is stored in and analyzed by computers of tremendous power housed in giant facilities known euphemistically as data farms.

The people at the NSA will tell you this is being done for our protection. The folks at Amazon will say it's being done to better meet our needs as consumers. And our "friends" at Facebook will contend that harvesting every last iota of data about us enables the company to better help us connect with others. It's all for the good. It's all being done with our best interests at heart. It's all about us.

Yet.

While it is nice to locate lost acquaintances online, be apprised of a product we will find interesting but had no idea existed, or have those charged with our defense make use of new tools to anticipate and neutralize threats, we know that those collecting all of this data do so to know us not as unique persons but as consumers, not as beloved individuals but as data points in a threat-analysis matrix.

There is, however, another who knows all about us, who is familiar with the most intimate details of our lives. The prophet Jeremiah was familiar with him, recounting in what we know as chapter four of his book:

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the

Continued on next page

SUNDAY SERVICE

The Pastoral Perspective, *cont. from Page 1*

Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.” (Jer. 1:4-8)

With these words Jeremiah begins his account of his call. The prophet, we learn, was chosen by One who has known him since before he was born, who is familiar with his inmost secrets and failings, yet who trusts him implicitly with great work.

Implicit in Jeremiah’s call was the knowledge that there is nowhere, no way to hide from God. Yet rather than feel violated or threatened, as we might by today’s seemingly all-knowing holders of Big Data, Jeremiah is comforted by God’s familiarity with him—and we can be, too. Like Jeremiah, despite our manifold failings, we are loved by the Creator of the Universe. We mess up, yet he still cherishes each of us, and always will.

Big data may be a big deal, presenting the potential to change the way our government delivers services, including the provision of security, or the manner in which companies interact with customers, offering ever better commercial experiences. An unintended consequence, though, is that it can make the individual seem pretty small. All our vital statistics, our interests, our passions, our wants, reduced to a series of ones and zeroes that are sliced, diced, and turned every which way by people we don’t know and never will.

Fortunately, there is something even bigger than Big Data, and that is God, the One who has known each of us since before the beginning, who rejoices in our individuality, who calls us to be a part of his kingdom, who loves us, holds us, and empowers us.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

Save the date...

Kick-off Sunday is September 8!

Mark your calendars and plan to join in the Blessing of the Backpacks, Church School registration, pizza and ice cream, and lots of outdoor fun!

COMMUNITY DINNER

Sunday, August 25 at 5:00 pm

Team Leader: Nan Parsons

Please participate in this vital service to our local community, especially if you haven’t done so before. Volunteers old and new are always welcome to donate ingredients and help with cooking/prep, set-up, serving, and clean-up.

Never helped before but interested in trying? Make THIS your month!

A Community Dinner Appeal

We need team leaders!

We are looking for Team Leaders for our monthly dinners from September onward.

If you are interested in taking on this important role, or if you have questions about what it involves, please sign up in the Parish Hall or contact the office.

Queued for
Coffee Hour

August—Christian Education

September—Diaconate

October—Mission & Social Action

AUGUST 2013 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 10a Worship	29	30 7p Boy Scouts	31 6p UVPRN	1	2 7p Cub Scouts Committee	3 No Men's Fellowship Breakfast this month No Bible Study
4 10a Worship (Communion)	5	6 No Stew'dship Committee this month 7p Boy Scouts	7 6p UVPRN	8 No Grafton-Orange Assn this month	9	10 No Bible Study
11 10a Worship	12 No Diaconate this month	13 7p Boy Scouts	14 6p UVPRN	15	16	17 No Bible Study
18 10a Worship No Mission & Social Action this month	19	20 No Church Council this month 7p Boy Scouts	21 6p UVPRN 7p Christian Ed Committee	22	23 SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE	24 No Bible Study
25 10a Worship 5p Community Dinner	26 No Board of Governors this month	27 7p Boy Scouts	28 6p UVPRN	29	30	31 No Bible Study
1 SEPTEMBER 10a Worship (Communion)	2 LABOR DAY	3 7p Stewardship Committee 7p Boy Scouts	4 6p UVPRN	5 7p Choir resumes	6 7p Cub Scouts Committee	7 FALL KICK-OFF WEEKEND 8a Men's Fellowship Breakfast 9a Bible Study

If your event is missing or incorrect, please notify us at church@fccleb.org or 603-448-4281.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CHURCH COUNCIL

At its meeting in July, Council learned that the **Board of Governors** has been reduced to three active members. The Board will come to Council for support until this situation is remedied. It was pointed out that the Board may approach church members to fill these positions; if approved by Council, they would serve until the next Annual Meeting. Council also discussed the **Nominating Committee's** urgent need for new members. It was agreed that Council should actively invite the congregation to participate on all committees, particularly these two but on others as well.

Warren Belding asked Council to consider how we should proceed with **Nancy Brown's** work. Her first workshop in June was good but, some felt, too general. It was agreed that the congregation seems to want to discuss specifics, to have an honest conversation, and try to resolve particular issues. A neutral time seems preferable to a Sunday, and the idea of using a Council meeting time was widely supported.

The **Trustees** met at the end of May. Invested funds are doing well and meeting expectations. All roofing expenses from the spring have been paid.

Council considered the need for more efficient communication among the Trustees, Council,

and the Treasurer. The Trustees rely on regular information such as monthly financial reports, and Council uses that information to plan for the future. Council also recommended that the **Finance Committee** meet as soon as convenient for its members.

In a related matter, Council discussed alternative methods for paying bills and revisited the ongoing question of opening a church credit-card account.

A discussion also arose about specific, **non-monetary gifts and donations** offered to the church, since it is unclear whether we have a policy for accepting such gifts. The Trustees have a policy for gifts of stock and other financial assets, but not for these situations. John Scott offered to draft something on this subject for September.

Todd Heatherton raised the need to transfer **ownership of the church website**. We're currently signed up for five years, but this needs to be addressed. There are no budgetary issues, since this costs only about \$70 annually.

The **Diaconate** organized an all-church hike on June 23, which

went very well. On the weekend of September 27-29 there will be a retreat at the Horton Center, in collaboration with two other churches. It is hoped that this retreat will engage our youth as well as adults.

The deacons have also discussed the next after-church **Forum and Potluck**, although September's church schedule is complicated. The purpose would be to have committee representatives speak, to educate the congregation about each committee's function and invite participation. (See related notes from Stewardship Committee about its proposed inventory of congregational interests and talents.)

Pete Mason is no longer chair of the **Safety Committee**; new co-chairs are Linda Oronte and Barb Jones. In a related issue, Valerie Nevel noted the need to develop guidelines for addressing sexual harassment and toxic work space, including options for a dual reporting process. The Council proposed that the Diaconate offer education on these topics.

The **Music Committee** will next meet in September. The recent

Update on Our Work with Facilitator Nancy Brown

Church Council is in the process of planning our next steps in working through issues with the facilitation of Nancy Brown. The congregation will be notified as plans develop and more information becomes available.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Classicopia series finished well, but greater concert attendance would be preferable, especially among church members, since the larger community seems to enjoy these concerts thoroughly. This fall the committee will survey the congregation about the role of music in worship, the Music at the Meetinghouse series, church choir, and other issues of music and ministry.

Women's Fellowship has had the kitchen stove cleaned. They are also planning to purchase fans for cooling the Sanctuary, as long as the fans are quiet enough. The group is selling pies on July 18 and August 15 at the Lebanon Farmer's Market.

Steve Silver has been busy with worship, pastoral care, and funerals. He will be taking study leave and vacation in late July and August, and Mark Rowell will preach in his absence. Mark will also be licensed by the Grafton-Orange Association to give communion.

Steve encouraged everyone to approach Mark with constructive feedback on his preaching and pastoral leadership, as he continues working toward ordination.

In October Steve will attend the annual meeting of the UCC Historical Council in Cleveland.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Church School's Kick-off Sunday will be September 9. Classes will resume that day, followed by pizza lunch and other surprises.

The first theme of the Church School year is "Life in Biblical Times." Children will learn about family life, occupations, clothing, food, money, worship, festivals, animals, plants, and music. Once they've finished exploring this theme, the children will share what they've learned at a special event, with crafts, illustrations, demonstrations, and music.

The committee will meet next on August 21 at 7:00.

ALL-CHURCH RETREAT

Friday to Sunday, September 27-29, 2013
UCC Horton Center (near Gorham, NH)

Next month our congregation will join members of Meriden and Hooksett Congregational Churches for a weekend of worship, prayer, spiritual study, and fellowship in the White Mountains. Offering a mix of individual and group activities, the retreat will also include structured activities for children and youth—**families are strongly encouraged to come!**

The schedule will be flexible to allow participation in particular activities as you're able; attending the whole weekend is not required. We will collaborate with the other two churches on some meals and activities.

RSVP to the church office as soon as possible.

To assist in planning the retreat, please let us know whether you're planning to come or even just considering it. Questions and suggestions welcome; contact the office or your deacon.

Please join us for what promises to be an enriching experience of building community and faith!

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

The Mission and Social Action Committee has begun to build a group for a trip to El Salvador with Epilogos, either on our own or in conjunction with another group. The church has made a donation of scholarship funds, and we will hear in the fall how it has been applied to elementary school students. The Salvadoran government has now promised free elementary school tuition, so the money will go toward the students' clothing, books, and other support costs. We have one donor who will support a single high-school student, establishing greater personal contact.

The committee also intends to report on our project to support Second Growth, a commitment we made last year.

Plans for the fall include FCC's annual participation in the Upper Valley Crop Walk, this year on Sunday, October 6. The committee will meet next on September 15 after worship.

and survey process this fall, to identify what our congregation members and families have to offer, what they need, and what interests them.

The committee is also researching a small, point-of-use hot-water system for the bathroom, perhaps in collaboration with the Men's Fellowship group.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Jon Scott reports that the Stewardship Committee is working on an inventory of potential volunteer tasks, needs, and opportunities. The group hopes to initiate a conversation

Jon is investigating options for software and services that would enable online donations and pledging on our church website. The committee actively seeks help in gathering and evaluating options, ideally so that a system might be in place for this fall's pledge season.

Committee Members Needed for Current Vacancies

The Board of Governors and Nominating Committee both have vacancies, and Church Council seeks volunteers to fill them. If you are interested in serving the church by participating on either of these important committees, or if you would like to know more about their responsibilities, please contact Warren Belding at 603-448-2630 or warren.d.belding@dartmouth.edu.

August Meetings

Christian Education 8/21, 7:00

September Meetings

Stewardship Committee 9/3, 7:00

Diaconate 9/9, 7:00

Mission & Social Action 9/15, 11:15

Church Council 9/17, 7:00

Christian Education 9/18, 7:00

Music Committee 9/22, 11:15

Board of Governors 9/23, 7:00

Women's Fellowship Pie Sale



Women's Fellowship will be selling pies at the Lebanon Farmers' Market on Thursday, August 15. Please consider making a pie or donating the money for someone else to make one. We also need volunteers that day to help with pie boxes and tent set-up. Please contact Linda Jacobs at mrandmrs.j@comcast.net or 802-296-8251.

This fall we will be taking orders for holiday pies (sold frozen); look for more details and an order form soon!

STEWARDSHIP AND MISSION



July 15, 2013

Reverend Steve Silver, First Congregational Church

Dear Steve and Congregation,

Thank you all for creating an evening of dining and theater with The Quick Silver Players for the benefit of WISE. We thank everyone who contributed to the success of the evening – parishioners who made delicious food for dinner, the interim Administrator, Brian Clancy, who worked to get the word out and attended to details, and to Biff Simpson and the Quick Silver Players for offering their theater for all to enjoy.

We are so appreciative of your commitment to this event and very grateful for all the work that went into putting it all together. WISE thanks you for the generous gift of \$677.00 from the evening's proceeds. Your encouragement and support of the work of WISE is evident; such community leadership is so important for us.

Again, many thanks for your support.

Warm regards,

Peggy O'Neil
Executive Director

WISE of the Upper Valley is a non-profit NH organization under the federal code (403)b. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this gift which is fully deductible to the extent allowed by law. Retain this acknowledgement for your tax records.

Program Center • 38 Bank Street • Lebanon, NH 03766
603-448-5922 • fax: 603-448-2799
24-Hour Crisis Line: 603-448-5525 (local) • 866-348-WISE (tollfree)
www.wiseoftheuppervalley.org



Praise in the Park!

Our ecumenical offering for LISTEN on July 21 totaled \$289.10, in addition to a full shopping cart of food donations.

Thank you!



Longtime friends (left to right: Betty Tedeschi, Karen Morganelli, Nora Miller, Carolyn Crocker, Lynn Anderson, Priscilla Carr, and Shelly Moses) gather to wish Karen Morganelli the fondest of farewells, as she and Peter prepare to move from Lebanon to Maine.

**Best Wishes and God Bless,
Karen and Peter!**

STEWARDSHIP AND MISSION

Wings of Hope

Butterfly Release
to Benefit Hospice Programs

Saturday, September 7, 12-3 pm

Butterfly Release, 1-2 pm
Colburn Park (Lebanon Green)

For the fourth year, the Visiting Nurse and Hospice Association of VT and NH is sponsoring this wonderful memorial and benefit event. (Rain location is the FCC sanctuary.)

You may purchase butterflies to be released for \$20 each, or simply attend as a spectator.

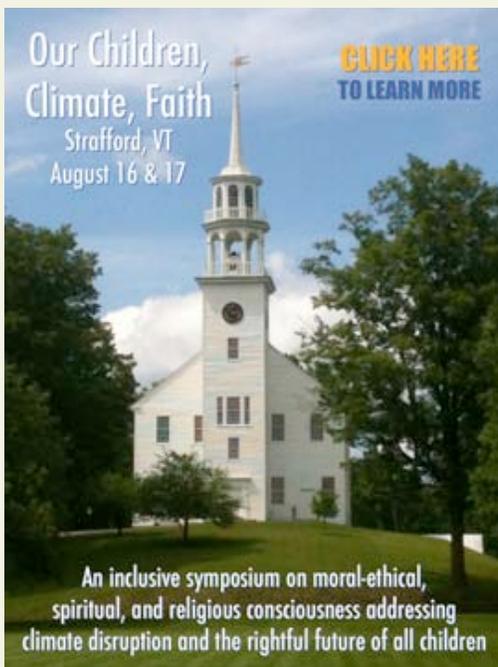
For more information, call 888-300-8853 or visit www.vnavnh.org.

Are You Ready for a Mission to El Salvador?

So are we!! The Mission and Social Action Committee is getting serious about planning a trip to El Salvador with Epilogos, either on our own or with another group—and we need to know who would be interested in coming! If you would consider making a commitment to this trip, or if you have questions, please contact Wendell Smith at 603-632-1117 or polestar3056@gmail.com.

020 CALLED TO CARE

If you would like to learn more about Called to Care or join the group, please contact Linda Jacobs (mrands.j@comcast.net / 802-296-8251).



Our Children, Climate, and Faith

August 16-17, Strafford, VT

This broadly conceived symposium will address the many relationships between climate change and faith. Please consider this opportunity to grow in your awareness of God's call toward stewardship of the environment.

Registration costs \$75 and up; (assistance may be available from the FCC Diaconate). For more information, please contact Jon Scott (603-298-8644 or jscottnh@comcast.net) or visit <http://faithclimateconference.org>.

FALL CONCERT PREVIEW



Music *at the* Meetinghouse

APPEARING THIS FALL
at the Meetinghouse

Peter Griggs: Latin Café

Saturday, September 14, at 7:30 pm

Internationally renowned guitarist Peter Griggs returns to FCC, to explore the classical and popular music of Latin America and Spain, including tango, bossa nova, samba, rumba, bolero, flamenco, and jazz.

Also performing (dates and times TBA) will be:

The Sunflower Wind Quartet

A variety of music wonderfully arranged for flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, and bassoon.

Zazzle Quartet

Four female voices, in perfectly blended ensemble, produce a warm, gorgeous sound.

And of course... a full series with Dan Weiser and **CLASSICOPIA!**

The First Congregational Church of Lebanon

Weekly Worship and Church School: Sunday, 10:00 am • Office Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9-12

10 South Park Street • P.O. Box 230 • Lebanon, NH 03766

603-448-4281 • church@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org

Rev. Stephen R. Silver – silver@fccleb.org • Newsletter Submissions – church@fccleb.org